

Road Runner

<http://www.th.gov.bc.ca/publications/roadrunners/index-roadrunners.htm>

Fall 2004

New system helps control avalanches

Submitted by Doug Wilson,
Senior Avalanche Officer
Avalanche and Weather
Programs

Construction is underway on a new avalanche control system for the Trans-Canada Highway, 50 kilometres east of Revelstoke. The new system will give the ministry's Revelstoke Avalanche Crew, headed by Bruce Allen, round the clock capability to control avalanches at the Laurie Avalanche Path.

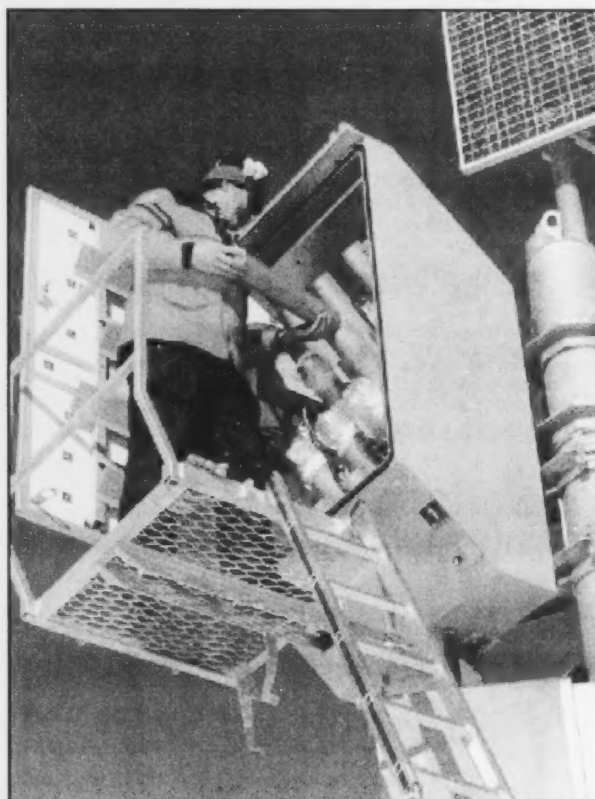
Scott Aitken, Avalanche Technician for the Coast-Chilcotin, is the on-site ministry project manager working with the subcontractor; Summit Lifts, which is installing the new Avalanche Guard remotely-fired avalanche control system. The primary

contractor for the project is Signeaux Evan Signals Inc. of Lachute, Quebec; represented in B.C. by David Sly of CIL/Orion, well known in the B.C. avalanche business as suppliers of explosives for avalanche control.

The Avalanche Guard system is widely accepted and relied upon by European operations and is now making a name for itself in the North American market.

The Alaska Railway, Wyoming Department of Transportation and Washington Department of Transportation have all purchased Avalanche Guard systems to upgrade their avalanche programs; primarily to replace outdated military

Continued on page 2



Once loaded, the Avalanche Guard can be remotely operated from a safe distance. The system has proven its success in many jurisdictions.

Combining work, study a worthwhile challenge

Dave Byng, Executive Director, Properties and Business Management Branch, has successfully completed a two-year full-time Masters program focused on Leadership, taken at Royal Roads University while working full-time.

Dave says, "This was only possible by combining academic studies with 'real world' issues at MoT, leading to a major project or thesis on the relationship between leadership, organizational culture, employee satisfaction, customer (or the public's) satisfaction, and the public's confidence in government. This integrated with the ministry's Customer Service Project."

How do you accomplish full-time school work and a full-

Continued on page 2



Steve Uyesugi, District Manager for Bulkley-Stikine District, hosted a summer barbecue at his home in June. Here is our group photo! Everyone pitched in with a potluck food item. We had more food than people. Do our bellies look full?

Studies give Dave Byng an MBA and an award

time job? "Many, many people helped me along the way," credits Dave. "It would not have been possible without the support of family and the folks at the Ministry of Transportation, in particular John Dyble, who were understanding of extended absences while at school.

"Dan Doyle and John were both huge advocates of the work being done for the ministry's customer service. And certainly my thanks goes to the PBMB branch staff who 'took up the slack' during my absences."

Dave was the peer-nominated recipient of a prestigious Royal Roads Founders' Award, adjudicated by a selection panel chaired by the registrar and division dean.

Royal Roads University Founders' Awards are presented to the graduating

learner in each program who has exemplified the ideals articulated in the education plan of the university.

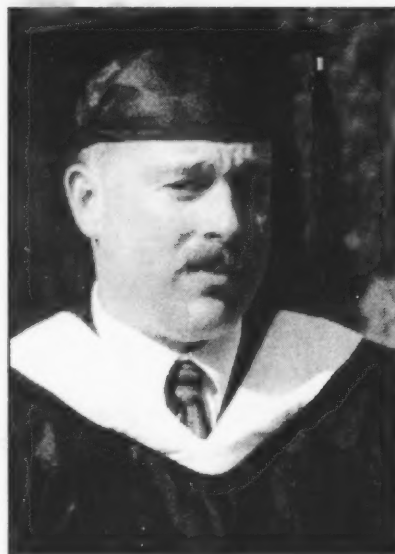
The award criteria place emphasis on strength in the areas of leadership, sustainability and personal development.

"The award was the result of the combined efforts of the project team, not an individual.

"I am very pleased that the ministry has subsequently nominated the project team's great work on customer service for the Premier's Award for Service Excellence.

"Our Ministry walks the talk when it comes to supporting the principles of life-long learning and service excellence through continuous improvement."

Congratulations Dave!



Dave Byng

Avalanche Guard expected to reduce road closure times

(Continued from page 1)

artillery. Our Laurie installation will be the first Avalanche Guard system in Canada.

So what is an Avalanche Guard? The system consists of a pair of metal cabinets mounted on a mountain top tower that is similar to a ski lift tower. Each cabinet contains 10 mortar tubes that can individually fire an explosive charge into the avalanche start zones with a range of about 200 metres. Targets are selected and the devices are test fired to ensure accuracy. During the winter, the avalanche crew can fire the devices from a safe location on the highway using a computer/radio link. The installation on the Laurie avalanche path will have four towers installed at three locations with a total of 60 charges; that should provide enough fire power for an entire season.

One of the unique aspects of this project is the shared ownership of the

avalanche start zones; while the section of highway that is exposed to avalanches is fully on provincial land, the start zones of the Laurie Path are split by the boundary between provincial land and Glacier National Park. (Three of the four towers will be located on Parks Canada land.)

With the cooperation of Parks Canada, we were able to conduct an environmental assessment and obtain a land use permit to build and operate the new avalanche control system.

This new Avalanche Guard system provides 24-hour readiness and is a poor-weather alternative to the current avalanche control practice of deploying explosives from a helicopter. With this avalanche control system upgrade, it is expected that we will see a reduction in the number of avalanches that reach the highway, as well as reduced closure times from the Laurie Avalanche Path.



Look up, way up

Want to know more about this picture and the helicopter-based concrete pour? Look for details in the next issue of the Road Runner.

Down and out (and about) in Brazil

Submitted by Dave Byng, Executive Director
Properties and Business Management Branch

The sound of a cell phone ringing in a jungle village along the Amazon River emphasized the remarkable contrasts that exist in modern Brazil; people live in thatched huts and fish from dugout canoes, while the latest model jets wing by overhead.

Earlier in the week, our family had arrived in the Amazon to work with the river people or "caboclos," who have ancestry of native Indian, African and Portuguese. We continued our travels to more remote areas of Brazil. After working in and exploring the Amazon Basin, between Manaus and Santarem, we moved onto the Pantanal, the world's largest wetlands, containing the highest densities of wildlife of both the Americas.



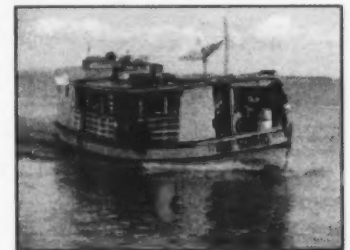
From the Pantanal we flew to Bonito, where we went caving, river rafting and skin-diving down rivers. We concluded our trip by traveling to Argentina's Iguazu Falls, one of the natural wonders of the world and the Itaipu Dam, one of the modern wonders of the world.

The contrasts are certainly evident in the transportation sector. While traveling on Brazilian airlines, you experience excellent service and high quality meals, which are only a fond memory for most North Americans. However, when a big soccer game is on, everything stops, including boarding your plane. We were catching a flight at the same time Brazil was playing their archrival, Argentina, in the South American Cup final.

Our flight's departure time came and went without so much as a whisper over the PA to inform travelers of a delay. All the passengers, flight crew and airline staff were watching the big game, crowded around the federal police's television in the waiting area! When the game ended, with Brazil victorious, the flight crew could be spotted through the cheering fans, sprinting across the tarmac to ready our aircraft for departure.



Traveling to the far reaches of a huge country like Brazil required significant air travel. However, the average rural Brazilian uses far less glamorous means, and as a result, does not stray too far from home. In the Amazon Basin, rivers are the principal transportation. Most of the people living in jungle villages along the river have a wooden canoe as their sole means of personal transportation. Families typically lead a subsistence lifestyle, farming or fishing to make ends meet; consequently they have limited resources to travel beyond areas they can reach with a paddle. Living in isolated circumstances with minimal income and mobility, their access to educational, medical and employment opportunities is extremely limited. Public transportation to most of the villages is provided by line boats, kind of a combination waterborne bus/semi service that provides transportation for people and freight between the villages and to the markets. The larger line boats looked



strangely familiar, their design strikingly similar to the paddle wheelers that navigated our rivers a century or so ago, only now they are fueled by diesel, rather than wood or coal. Travel on the line boats can be an arduous experience. Passengers are packed like sardines, side by side, bumping up against each other while they swing in their hammocks, enduring the oppressive heat, humidity and exhaust fumes. Fortunately, Brazilians are very social people and seem to relish the opportunity to travel, even in conditions that would challenge most North Americans.



The Amazon highways are generally poorly built, often with only a dirt surface, and are subject to flooding in the rainy season,

making them far less reliable than river transportation. Their poor condition leads to some interesting driving practices; motorists will pull off the highway and drive on the shoulder or in the ditch if it suits them. As traffic flattens and smoothes the ditch bottom, drivers from the other lane will join them, creating two lanes of opposing traffic in the ditch! Another approach, if your lane surface is too rough, is simply to drive in the opposite lane, traffic permitting of course! It was quite disconcerting when a large bus was bearing down on us at highway speed in our lane, only to move back into its own lane

Continued on page 4

Travels in Brazil show transport systems very different from our own

(Continued from page 3)

at what seemed like the last possible moment. It was hardly surprising to learn that Brazil has the highest motor vehicle accident rate in the world. It also has the world's highest annual number of snakebite deaths, a piece of trivia I forgot to share with my wife, Cheryl, until the end of our trip, but I digress.



Rather than police patrolling the highways, speed limits are enforced by speed bumps in populated areas, really big nasty speed bumps, so big in fact that the ditch driving practice takes place around them. Another interesting traffic-calming device used when construction materials are in short supply, is a speed ditch. Driving at night can be a real adventure as the speed bumps/ditches are not well marked, if they are marked at all.

The rural highways are typically used by commercial transport trucks hauling crops to market due to the much cheaper land and labour costs in Brazil vis-à-vis the United States. As a consequence, the number of large trucks hauling soybeans from the farms to loading facilities on the river has increased significantly. We found it amazing to see the oceangoing freighters traveling up the Amazon to the middle of the continent, to dump their cargo and load up on hardwoods and soybeans for their return.



While the rivers form the transportation corridors in the Amazon, dirt roads resembling decommissioned forest service roads, serve the rural residents in the Pantanal. Southern Brazil has obvious economic advantages compared to the northern part of the country, and this is evident in the relatively well-constructed trunk highways that connect the rural side road infrastructure.



Agriculture is big business in the Pantanal, with Fazendas or ranches raising large numbers of cattle. Each ranch is accessed by a grass airstrip located on high ground (watch out for stray cows), as well as being served seasonally by very low-grade roads that connect them to the highway system. The side road infrastructure floods for extended periods during the rainy season, making much of it impassable.

The Brazilian cowboys or "gauchos" use 4x4 trucks with air breathers at their roof level, permitting use in deep water. When the water depth precludes the use of 4x4s, large farm tractors are enlisted, hauling wagonloads of people and supplies to/from the neighbouring towns. Ever take a 60-mile road trip, one way, in a farm wagon? That is typical in the Pantanal. Even the tractors can't be used at times, limiting transportation to small aircraft, which are generally only used in emergency situations, such as snakebites. Snakebites are a concern in the rainy season particularly as the majority of the land floods, leaving small islands of dry land where animals congregate, people and snakes included. While traveling in the rural areas of Brazil can be challenging, the people are fantastic, friendly and welcoming, and the country is as spectacular as you will find anywhere in the world. We are already planning our next trip.



Improving 'The Hill'

John Dyble, ADM, Highways Department and Tracy Cooper, Regional Director, Southern Interior, spent some quality time on August 18 checking out last year's construction project on the Bella Coola Hill on Highway 20. It was a beautiful day with some great scenery. The work made the infamous hill more stable and safer for motorists.

PECSF car rally coming October 23

Challenge your co-workers, rival departments and friends: Sponsor a car or participate in our multi-ministry car rally, taking place in Victoria on Saturday, October 23. Watch your e-mail for more information; details will be coming soon.

Alaska Highway four-laning gearing up for a complicated Phase Two

By Ron Wiebe

Rampant activity in the oil patch over the past few years has solidified Fort St. John's role as a service centre for the northeast corner of the province. As the city continues to grow by leaps and bounds, so too has the traffic.

Like many of our highways, it serves as the main route through the city, and as such, the road is frequently congested with oil patch workers, tourists and commuters.

That's just the situation we're now in the midst of correcting with the four-laning of this arterial portion of the Alaska Highway. Phase one, on the south end of town, is nearing completion. The job will be completed next year.

Phase two will be considerably more complicated, mostly due to the vast number of businesses neighboring the highway. To alleviate the potential for some unpleasant surprises to arise at the last moment, the project team wanted public feedback. So, the proposed phase two design was put on display at an open house on July 30.

The event garnered plenty of



The Mayor of Fort St. John (centre) has the attention of a few residents as he discusses the merits of the design. Close to a hundred people attended the Open House.



The Alaska Highway four-laning project is well underway. Phase one construction, at the south end of the city, is nearly complete.

interest from residents, business owners and other users. Several city councilors, including Mayor Thorlakson himself, were on hand to provide support to the ministry team.

There was a flurry of visitors as soon as the doors opened, and activity was brisk for most of the evening. By the end of the evening, about a hundred folks had taken the time to drop in.

The majority of people were happy to see that their safety and congestion concerns were being addressed, but as might be expected, not everyone was ecstatic. With a plan to eliminate many of the existing direct accesses in favor of frontage roads and controlled intersections, some business owners were concerned by a perceived potential loss of business.

That's all right; that's the reason we were there. Based on the input received, designers at Urban Systems can now tweak the design where possible to address some of these concerns, so that we win more proponents and we're ready to proceed with phase two construction next season.

Birthday surprise a tropical treat

Submitted by Greg Galpin, Area Manager, South Island

My, oh my, how the years have flown by! Thirty years with the Ministry of Transportation and turning 50. My wife Lori asked me if I could go anywhere in the world, where would I like to go for my 50th birthday. Since I have been fortunate to travel around the world and

to many places on this earth, I deliberated on this topic. I replied that I had always wanted to drive (like a good ol' highways guy) the Florida Keys in a Jaguar convertible. She laughed! It's August and its hurricane season in Florida.

As my birthday approached, I was not certain where she was taking me or who

Continued on page 6



Surprise! A dream come true

(Continued from page 5)

would be joining us, and I was quite certain she would not take me to Florida during the hurricane season.

We were eventually joined by my brother and my sister and their spouses, who insisted I could not see my airplane boarding passes.

We got on the plane and touched down in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

I was excited and surprised! Hurricane Charlie had passed to the north of Ft. Lauderdale and there was no evidence of its path. This was reassuring.

After overnight in Ft. Lauderdale, we picked up our Jaguars and headed south to Key Largo. It was 98 F and the air was very, very humid.

I kept the top up on the convertible through Miami until we reached the outskirts of the Everglades.

Here we took a 2 1/2 hour airboat ride through the mangro swamps and to my surprise there were no mosquitoes or other obnoxious bugs. There were, however, alligators and many various birds species.

The gators recognize the sound of the airboat and the voice of the operator and approach us without fear.

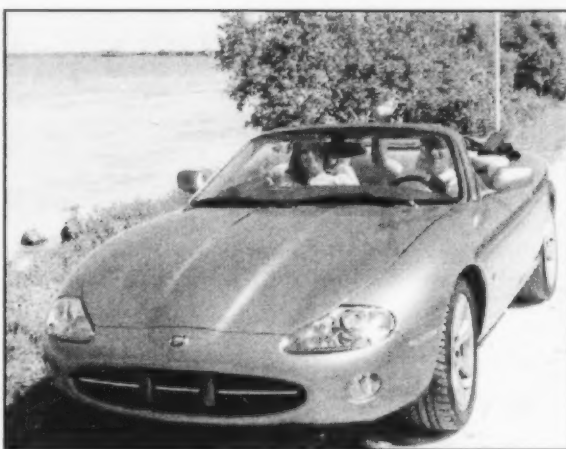
It is against the law in Florida to feed the gators, but because the airboat captains frequent the Everglades so often, they are familiar to the gators.

Back on the road, the top comes down on the Jaguar and we head for Key Largo, looking for some coconut shrimp, fried grouper and a cool drink.

It's so hot that I have the top down and the air conditioner on full blast. There are 42 bridges in the Keys, linking these tiny cays together. The longest bridge is

seven miles long. Key West is the biggest "key," being two miles wide by four miles long.

At Key Largo we took a sunset snorkel cruise, 45 minutes straight out off the east coast of Key Largo in the Atlantic



Key Largo, here we come!

Ocean. The snorkeling there is similar to that in Hawaii. We encounter sun fish, turtles and even barracudas (one six-footer). The sunset sail home was absolutely beautiful.

The next day, it was off to Key West, home to many lost souls, entrepreneurs and famous people.

Ernest Hemingway made his home here for nine years. Others were Tennessee Williams, Betty Page, Thomas Edison, Calvin Klein and Harry Truman, President of the United States. But the most famous person of all was, of course, JIMMY BUFFET!

Key West is at Mile "0" on US Highway # 1, and is the most southerly point of the United States.

It is where the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea meet. It is 90 miles due south by boat to

Cuba. Key West people, or the local "conch" as they are called, are extremely laid back. No worries here, except for the Category 5 hurricane!

The island was a haven for pirates to hide out, and for many years it was home to those escaping other destinations for one reason or another.

Key West was a fishing village and when the shrimp were abundant they called it the "pink gold."

There were many Cuban cigar factories in the past. Now it survives on tourism, with most of the waterfront bought up by people with a way too much money. One thing for sure is that Key West is Paradise!

We spent two days in Key West taking in the sights, celebrating my birthday (partying on Duval Street) and trying the local food such as "conch" (sea snail), grouper, mutton snapper, gator and Florida lobster.

Florida lobster is a little tougher than Maine lobster, but fantastic all the same. The flora here is beautiful.

There are plants you've never seen before and flowers of every color. Mango, banana, coconut and avocado trees are common and their fragrances fill the air.

Then it was back to Ft. Lauderdale, where most of the rich Americans call home, where the yachts are piled up like firewood.

With the announcement that Hurricane Francis was on her way, some of the yachts were tied off with eight or more spring lines and looked like they were in a giant spider web. With evacuation of Florida becoming imminent, we headed for home, carrying with us some terrific memories of a great birthday surprise.

Stephanie Gillis a great addition for "Team Skeena"

Don Ramsay, DMT Skeena, along with the rest of the Skeena District staff, are looking forward with great anticipation to welcoming Stephanie Gillis to her newest challenge as Area Manager for the North Coast Service Area based in the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Stephanie replaces Al McKean who has moved over to Terrace as Skeena's Bridge Area Manager. Stephanie hails originally from New Brunswick and says that she is excited to get back to a maritime environment.

Stephanie comes most recently from Cranbrook in the Rocky Mountain District and comes to the northwest with great reviews and great expectations. "Losing Stephanie must be a big loss for our southeastern colleagues," says Don, "but enticing her to the opposite corner of the province is certain to be a great gain for Skeena District and our customers in the Charlottes."

Stephanie started her new job October 4, and echoing the sentiments of those she's leaving behind, we wish her great success.



Dan Palesch promoted

Dan has been with the ministry for over 23 years, commencing his career with Marine Branch in the early 1980s. Dan's high energy, his strong people skills and his attention to detail allowed him to progress rapidly through the ranks of the Branch with postings at: Kootenay Lake, Revelstoke, Albion (twice) and Francois Lake. Dan's final appointment with the Branch was that of Marine Captain at Albion, prior to becoming a Roads Area Manager in the West Kootenay District in 1999. In addition to his regular duties during his tenure in West Kootenay District, Dan has taken on additional tasks as a member of the local Cross Ministry Work Team for Shared Services, as well as that of the district representative for the People Plan. Dan is married with two girls ages 6 and 8. His hobbies include bodybuilding, music and his family.

Kim St. Peter remembered for positive attitude, leadership

Kim St. Peter, District Services Manager for the Fort George District, passed away as a result of a tragic motor vehicle accident the evening of Saturday, July 17, 2004. Kim and her husband, Kevin, were survived by their 15 year old daughter Alyssa.

Kim joined the Fort George Team as District Clerk in 1996, after working with the Ministry of Environment. In 2002, Kim became the District Services Manager and developed this new position into an integral part of the District Team. Kim's positive attitude, strong leadership, willing mentorship and friendly approach will be deeply missed by both the District and Regional staff.

Kim took on assignments with eagerness and was willing to help out in any situation. As a TEAM member supporting the Prince George Wildfire PREOC, Kim received letters of appreciation and commendation from PEP. Kim and her husband Kevin were also active in organizing and playing on a local recreational baseball team. Kim had a great passion for her family and friends, and often spoke of the accomplishments of her daughter with pride.



The District and Region were both able to present sizable donations to Alyssa's trust fund. The ladies in the Regional office also compiled a memory book, filled with photos and notes, which was presented to Alyssa. The Fort George Office would like to thank our friends and colleagues across the province for all their kind words and support, both for the District and Regional staff and for Kim's family and daughter in our time of need.

*On behalf of the Fort George District team,
Rick Blixrud, District Manager, Transportation*

Workshop outlines hazards of the job

■ Education a vital part of protecting staff and the public

Nature presents us with a wide variety of perils that many of our staff needs to contend with in the course of their work.

Recognizing such dangers and their potential implications provides some obvious advantages to not only our staff, but to our customers as well.

With that in mind, Gord Hunter of the MoT Northern Region Geotechnical Branch and Lyle Larsen of WLAP put together a two-day, natural hazards workshop for the Development Approvals staff and others interested in the science. The intent was to provide guidance for new staff and a refresher for those getting long in the tooth. Some staff from Southern Interior Region made the trip as well.

The first day consisted of an office presentation where an overview of the technical material was provided.

What to look for during site inspections was covered in greater detail. Gord's presentation informed staff of the latest terminology and field recognition tools for natural hazards along with with informative reference material. Lyle Larson then took the helm to describe the creek, lake and ocean

setbacks as they relate to covenants, flood construction levels, etc. In addition, Lyle announced the imminent release of WLAP's new flood plain mapping and access to it through their website.

With the latter came instruction on how to use this information to greatest advantage and where to find the technical information on flow and how it relates to building setbacks.

Day two consisted of a field trip to the Robson Valley where both aspects of geotechnical and stream hazards exist. Participants hiked up, down and across alluvial fans to discover the unpredictable forces at work creating braided channels, debris flow deposits and occasionally catastrophic timber damage.

Portions of the Fraser River were inspected to examine forces of nature being applied to erosion, accretion, deposition and their effects on adjacent property. In addition, some landslide sites where the ministry has field instrumentation for monitoring active ground movements were visited.

Thankfully, the weather cooperated nicely, making this opportunity to break with routine enjoyable for all.



A site visit to Amies Slide in McBride provided an opportunity to view field instrumentation equipment in an active landslide. Here, Gord Hunter leads the discussion.



This stop along Highway 16 at Goat Creek afforded an opportunity to examine an area of frequent rockfall. The ditch is designed so that detached rock fragments are contained in the ditch rather than rolling onto the highway.

Livingstone appointed to post

A familiar face around the regional office during her tenure as an auxiliary, Stephanie Livingstone has won a permanent, regular position of Regional Administrative Assistant, Northern Region, as of July 30.

Stephanie brings plenty of work experience and enthusiasm to her new role, having held previous office and field positions. Prior to

joining the ministry in March of 2003, Stephanie had toiled in silviculture with forestry for five years. Before that, she ran an excavator and a bobcat for a landscaping company for two summers, and managed a greenhouse for a summer prior to that.

A relative newcomer to beautiful British Columbia, Steph calls Chatham, Ontario her hometown. She's also lived

in Kitchener and Lindsay, Ontario. Stephanie now shares the rent with partner Lane who works for a private forestry firm in Prince George. The rest of the family resides in Ontario, where the senior Livingstone is a minister in Goderich, and a sister is employed as a nurse in London.

Northern Region is pleased she's able to stay awhile!



Stephanie Livingstone

Busy Peace District staff help each other meet work challenges

Submitted by Leslie Elder

Once again the Peace District staff has been busy! As in past years, we have been given the challenge of administering a sizable project budget, this year in the range of \$70 million. The residents of Fort St. John and travelers of the Alaska Highway are pleased to see the long awaited four-laning of the Alaska Highway. In addition, many roads in the district are seeing first time hard-surfacing and rehabilitation of existing asphalt, such as Hudson's Hope Highway which hasn't been re-surfaced since the 1960's – again some very happy travelers. Administering a budget of that significance is no easy task, especially when factors such as snow in September put delays on the projects.

Over the past year, the District has seen a steady increase in activity, mostly linked to the economic growth of the Region. To assist the District in dealing with the added volume of work, we have been successful in recruiting several new staff to ensure we are able to provide the best customer service possible.

Late last year we hired two District Operations Technicians to assist the district in implementation of the ever popular RIMS project and in preparation for the maintenance contract renewals.

Doug Rennie moved from Cranbrook to Fort St. John, and will be primarily responsible for Service Area 21 which is now under contract to Caribou Road Services.

Doug recently got married and bought a house in Fort St. John, so we hope to see him around for many years! Doug returned from his honeymoon to see that some of the "old" married couples had prepared him for what's to come! Hopefully, Doug doesn't have to spend too much time in his home away from home!



Bill in Snooper



Doug



Sacha



Shelley

Sacha Antifaeff moved to Fort St. John from Williams Lake where she was working for Caribou Road Services. She will focus her attention on Service Area 22 where Yellowhead Road & Bridge remains as the maintenance contractor. Sacha brings her knowledge of Autocad to the district which has been a great help in providing Dave with all those "pretty" maps that he loves so much!

We have a new bridge area manager, Bill Becker, who is primarily responsible

for the South Peace area bridges. Bill has been busy discovering all the bridges in his area which covers from MacKenzie Junction north to the Peace River and east to the Alberta border. Although Bill hasn't had any encounters with bears, he has had to learn the hard way about the use of bear spray! Bill is seen here experiencing a ride in the snooper truck while inspecting the East Pine Bridge.

With Neil Wood moving over to
Continued on page 10

Like father, like son

Submitted by Pat Cruickshank,
Regional Manager Programming,
Partnerships and Planning

While on vacation in August, I stopped by a paving project with my three-year-old son, Simon. The project located on Highway 6 south of Salmo near the U.S. border, is a test section of rubberized asphalt arranged by Geotechnical & Materials Engineering in Victoria. Vince Trozzo, Paving Manager, was kind enough to give us an introduction to the project and the method being tested



South Coast golf tournament helps charity

The 18th annual South Coast Regional Golf Tournament at Swan-e-Set Bay Golf Club in Pitt Meadows sure had the weather gods smiling on us. The rain did show some force for 2 holes, but the sun shone through after that to make it a HUGE success. Sponsors once again came through with prizes that were extraordinary. R.F. Binnie and Associates donated a wonderful 6' X 3' poster

board, displaying "Welcome to the 18th Annual South Coast Region Golf Tournament", all the players and the hole that they were starting on, the sponsors, all over an aerial view of Swan-e-Set in the background. The board will be hung at the South Coast Region. Winners of the golfing prizes were: Val Fabick for Ladies Low Net; Mike Newton (R.F. Binnie) for Mens Low Net; Dianne Beck

for Ladies KP AND straightest drive; John Paley (R.F. Binnie) for Mens Longest Drive and Wendy Hall for Ladies Longest Drive. We had a raffle for four green fees with power carts at Swan-e-set with proceeds to the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Brent Dozzi won the prize and the Heart and Stroke Foundation got \$200. Congratulations to all and SEE YOU ALL NEXT YEAR!

New appointments in the ministry's Peace District

(Continued from page 9)

Operations as a Road Area Manager, we once again had to recruit for the position of Senior District Development Technician. We were successful in hiring Dawn Braithwaite to our District. Dawn was born and raised in Fort St. John and has just graduated from UNBC. Dawn is excited about being part of the ministry and with her experience and background in the Peace area, we are glad to have her join our district.

We have experienced a busy season so far in this area, with an average of five

subdivision applications per week coming across Dawn's desk, so she is grateful for the chance to get out into the field!

Of course we couldn't administer a large budget and keep on top of all those invoices with out some help in the administration department. We were pleased to welcome Shelley Watson to the district in August. Shelley recently moved here from Edmonton after getting married in July. Welcome to all our new staff! Time really does fly when you're having fun - something we know how to do in the North!

Editor's note

It has indeed been a busy summer for everyone! Our accomplishments have been tremendous.

As we wind down the 2004 construction season and get plans in place for 2005, everyone should give themselves and their co-workers a good pat on the back and recognize each others' efforts. Thanks for taking the time out of your busy schedules to contribute to another great Road Runner.

"When one door of happiness closes, another opens; but often we look so long at the closed door that we do not see the one which has been opened for us."

- Helen Keller (1880-1968)

Highway conditions centre staff ready for the busy winter season

Submitted by Del Mecham, Manager, Provincial Highway Conditions Centre

It's coming to that time of year again when the Provincial Highway Conditions Centre (PHCC) will be getting into the busy winter season.

From the middle of April to the middle of October, the PHCC has a single operator on shift throughout each day.

This increases to two or three persons on shift, depending on call volume patterns, in the cooler half of the year.

The PHCC receives road condition information from the ministry's contracted Road and Bridge Maintenance Contractors.

Information on road works projects came from districts and incident information from the RCMP, contractors, etc.

Once received, PHCC operators process the information to go out on the web, prepare it for autofax, set up messages on the Changeable Message Signs (CMS), and read it into the telephone interactive voice response (IVR) system supplied through Telus.

This is all about to change to a new way of doing business. A new process will be incorporated into a web based software that has been named Drive BC.

In this process, the PHCC will still operate 24 hours a day, but road conditions and some incident information will no longer be collected and disseminated at the PHCC.

Instead, road and bridge maintenance contractors will be given direct access to a web input utility (WIU) and will be

responsible for entering the information themselves. Quality control will be provided through the districts and the web will be monitored by the PHCC.

Delays and closures for road works will be input through the same WIU but with additional functionality for the districts.

Eventually, road restrictions will also be input directly at the district level rather than being done at the PHCC.

The exact launch date for Drive BC has not been determined but the project team and Steering Committee are working hard to have it in operation before the end of the year.

PHCC operators will still be here 24 hours a day working to provide a quality service to all stakeholders. Operators will be dealing with incidents and other issues as they arise and will continue to control the CMS signs. Part of our new responsibilities will be to monitor input to the web, approve certain functions for publishing, and so forth.

We are expecting a busy season with all the changes and the need to get quality information out on the web. The new system is much more automated than the old. No more reading into the IVR system. Computer software will convert information to be published on the web from text to voice without the touch of human hands.

All these changes will make the dissemination of information quicker and more timely. Accuracy will still rest in the hands of those who are collecting and inputting details.

Drive BC is being widely anticipated among staff and the public, and it is strongly supported by the ministry.



Golf night was great fun for Southern Interior crew

On August 19, 20 people took part in the Southern Interior Golf Fun Night. A big thank you went out to everyone that participated for making the night a success.

Their most honest team was Tom Freeman, Crystal Chenier, Heather Braund and Penny Radies. For their honesty they will receive \$5.00 each from the Social Club.

The team that has "bragging rights" until they meet again was made up of Fred Baxter, Joe Amyott, Kathy Strobbe and Betty McCaw.

The value of training

The duration of an athletic contest is only a few minutes, while the training for it may take weeks of arduous work and continuous exercise of self-effort. The real value of the sport is not the actual game played in the limelight of applause but the hours of dogged determination and self-discipline carried out alone, imposed and supervised by an exacting conscience. The applause soon dies away, the prize is left behind, but the character you build is yours forever...

River reunion was a great trip

Submitted by
Dave Byng,
Executive
Director, PBMB

Most experiences with Geoff Freer are an ordeal, an adventure or both; this trip was no different.

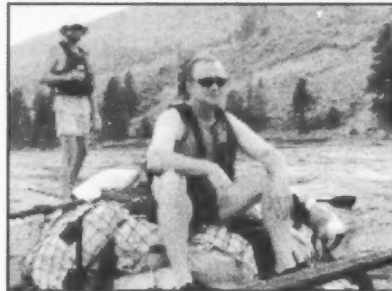
Leaving Victoria with a small commuter car, four people, and enough gear to fill both our vehicle and consume Lori Sutton's extra space, we rendezvoused with our rafting partners in Savona, you know, near Kamloops.

The group was primarily made of Geoff's friends (ever wonder why someone's friends are all lawyers-it will become clearer later) and colleagues from the Ministry of Transportation.

A fit, tanned, and relaxed Jon Buckle joined Lori Sutton and her two boys, our family and Geoff to make up the MoT alumni.

Floating down the Thompson River and watching the world slowly unfold before you was reminiscent of the travels of Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer, where the only care in the world was wondering

what form the next adventure would take. While the three-day float from Savona to Big Horn is suitable for families, there is enough white-water to make you pay



Geoff Freer



The Buckles



The Byngs

attention and have some fun.

Well most of us paid attention. Just not our "guide" at times.

After a bit of rough water, the river flattened out and Geoff encouraged Cheryl and I to take our two

sons, Tyler(11) and Mackenzie(9) down the river in a couple of inflatable kayaks, as did Lori Sutton with her son, Ian (11).

"No problem," Geoff says to the neophyte kayakers, "This is a great stretch of the river to learn on!"

So the kayakers dutifully head downriver with an adult and child in each craft, ahead of the rafts, blissfully ignorant of what awaits them.

Downstream the walls of the infamous Black Canyon unexpectedly close in around us and a loud rumble commences; we are in the wildest stretch of whitewater on the entire trip, with no way out!

Well, it was literally thrills, chills, and excitement catapulting over a series of big standing waves that just kept coming!

Afterwards, somewhat dishevelled but enthusiastic, we regrouped with our "guide" Geoff who said "Sorry about that! I forgot where we were. But you guys did great!"

Knowing that Geoff used to own a rafting company, I now understand how he met so many lawyers.

It was a real pleasure for the Ministry of Transportation gang to reconnect over those days on the river together.

It really reaffirmed what all of us already know: Our organization's strength lies in the great relationships that exist between us.

Ministry staff up for Premier's Awards

Earlier this summer, the BCPublic Service Agency announced the creation of the Premier's Awards to recognize and showcase the best examples of innovation and excellence in public service. The ministry was granted a total of four nominations and the Executive Committee selected the following names to go forward:

- Gregg Singer in the category of Leadership,
- Nick May in the category of Partnership,
- The Customer Service Project Team, led by Dave Byng, in the category of Service Excellence, and
- Al Szczawinski in the category of Innovation.

Further information about the awards and our nominees is located at: <http://www.bcpublicservice.ca/premiersawards/>. All the best to the nominees!



Summer of slides, floods and fires keeps staff busy across southern B.C.

Slides, floods and fires have been the theme through much of the past summer, adding to an already busy construction season.

Fires are a common event during summer months in British Columbia. However, slides and floods are usually spring freshet or even fall events. We always need to be prepared for what nature may bring our way.

Fortunately no lives were lost during any of these events. Hats off to everyone that responded to emergency situations throughout the summer!

Here are a few photos to give you a flavour for what occurred...

Top right: Highway 3, Stenwinder to Hedley. Photo by Dan Bella, Area Manager

Top left: Highway 3A, Kuskanook, Aug. 7. Photo submitted by West Kootenay District.

Right: Seton Lake, 6 km west of Lillooet, started June 20. Photo courtesy Ministry of Forests.



Soon to be fish and chips...

Submitted by Don Ramsay, District Manager Transportation, Skeena

Traditions in the Northwest include the annual halibut fishing expedition out of Prince Rupert. This year's trip was great fun and, as you can see at right, productive.

Pictured left to right are Hans Stach (a Terrace realtor formerly with the Ministry of Transportation) along with Grant Watson (District Ops Tech, Skeena), Wilf Taekema (Bulkley/Stikine District Tech), Geoff Phillips (Area Manager, Skeena), Randy Penner (Operations Manager, Skeena) and Frank Maximchuk (Prince George geotech consultant and former Northwest Region staffer). They limited out.



The long and winding road of MoT acronyms

Submitted by Rajeeta Bains

With all the traveling I have done abroad, living in the Netherlands, backpacking through Europe and busting through India, moving into MoT land has been the biggest culture shock. The new language of acronyms, the foreign diet of sandwiches-to-go and the living accommodations in tiny blue cubicles lined up with MoT citizens, has helped me nestle into a world that keeps me smiling every day.

Over here in MoT land, the long and winding road is not a song by The Beatles but a way of life. There is a constant evaluating of accesses onto highways while I am driving back home to the interior on weekends and paving projects now get me excited rather than moaning thinking of traffic delays.

Completing my first month here in the West Kootenay District working as a Development Approvals Technician, has been the experience of a lifetime. I have relocated myself to cozy, little Nelson after completing my geography degree at the University of Victoria.

As my little office sitting on Ward Street has become home and the 20 odd bodies running around the office have become my new family, I smoothly make myself comfortable in my new world. A one-hour interview held two months ago in Vancouver felt like an afternoon visit with friends. The "judging" panel filled my mind with what fun this position would hold and the experience would be everything that traveling has held. I would have my ups and downs, be challenged and learn what I am capable of achieving and most importantly taking my strengths and knowledge to maximum heights.

The Technician Entry Level Program, in this short period, has given me the confidence to carry out responsibilities at a professional level. This experience is rewarding and each day holds something new to be learnt.

So, in the words of Paul McCartney (if he were a MoT employee):

*The long and winding road that leads to your door,
Will never disappear,*

*Provided that they are built up to our standards with a minimum thickness of 300 mm
SGSB and a gravel shoulder 1.5 metres wide.*

Don't leave me standing here; lead me to your door.



Rajeeta Bains



Tracy the Super Slider

While attending a district luncheon, staff in the Rocky Mountain District were fast to learn that Tracy Cooper is always ready to accept a dare.

On a \$20 dare from Erin Moxon, (all proceeds to go to the district's social fund) that Tracy wouldn't slide on the water slide.

Well social funds being what they are and Tracy being the sport he is, accepted the dare.

The Rocky Mountain Social Fund is now \$20 richer and Tracy was grateful he had a change of clothes!

Staff encouraged to check out new South Coast intranet site

The South Coast Region has launched its new and improved intranet website! Its focus is on the region with sections on

its people, projects, maps and other useful information. Thanks go out to the many staff who worked hard to get the site

ready. It is anticipated that the website will be updated monthly so that changes can be incorporated on a regular basis.

Rest Areas Get Student Boost

Skeena District has enjoyed the services of Alissa Gervais and Evan Smithanik as Rest Area Rangers over the summer.

As a life-time Terrace resident, it seems natural that Alissa would be an avid outdoor enthusiast, soaking up the beautiful BC scenery on camping, canoeing and hiking trips. Having three older brothers may have helped that passion along as well.

Alissa also enjoys snowboarding, swimming, volleyball and dancing in addition to her hobbies of painting and drawing. So, it's no surprise then that she's pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Okanagan University College.

Evan, the team leader, was originally from Terrace, but over the years, he's also



Alissa Gervais and Evan Smithanik

called Vanderhoof, Prince George, Calgary and the Ukraine home. His spare time is taken up playing piano, reading about history and politics and working on his car. The third of four children in his family, Evan returned in September to the University of Calgary where he is in his third year Commerce and Finance studies in the Faculty of Management.

Bulkley ambassadors enjoyed work

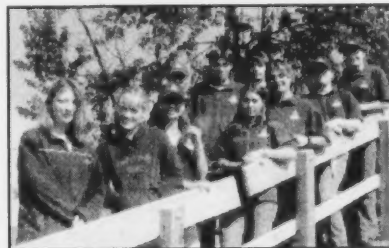
Students find value in Youth Employment Program in Bulkley-Stikine

Fourteen students found work with Bulkley-Stikine District this summer as Rest Area ambassadors: Heather Corliss and Cameron White, Burns Lake; Shawn Merkley and Katie Park, Houston; Jenna Ziegler and Erik Beerda, Smithers; Michael Becker and Keegan Jack, Hazelton; Sarah Willan and Ayla Ranahan, Kitwanga; Kimberly McLeod and Darcy McLeod, Dease Lake. Two others—Rosanne Steinke and Andrew L'Orsa—served as floaters.

Were these summer placements of value? Here are some endorsements from the students themselves:

"This was an interesting and fun project to be a part of. I had the opportunity to meet many different people from across the globe, and share BC with them." *Erik Beerda*

"I enjoyed this experience. There was always a new project to do and interesting people at the rest areas." *Jenna Ziegler*



Part of the group that served as Rest Area Ambassadors in Bulkley-Stikine District.

"This summer working as a Rest Area Ambassador was an awesome experience." *Ayla Ranahan*

"A unique experience, loved being outdoors and interacting with the public." *Mike Becker*

"This job has given me a chance to interact with many different people who I wouldn't have had an opportunity to meet otherwise. I have also been lucky enough to see a number of animals, including foxes, black bears, eagles, mountain goats, moose, bobcats and wolves." *Kimberly McLeod*

Friends I'll never know

By Darcy McLeod, Rest Area Ambassador

One of the more memorable things that happened during my job was spurred from a brief whim.

Kim and I were finishing up our work for the day at the Beaver Dam Rest Area. This rest area, from which no beaver dam is actually visible, (I should know; I've looked) is one of the few rest areas in our area that has an information kiosk. The kiosk, I noticed, had a clear plastic container attached to its face. Its purpose is to hold brochures, though they are, for the most part, empty except for the occasional bits of trash stuffed in.

We were about to leave when I had a flash of an idea. I ripped a piece of paper from my notebook and quickly I jotted down a note, which I then stuffed into the brochure holder. My hope was that perhaps a few people passing by would find the paper interesting and leave a note themselves.

About five weeks (give or take) passed. Kim and I didn't often go to Beaver Dam since it was a time consuming drive, but we stopped by a few times.

It wasn't until one of our last days of work doing a final cleanup of Beaver Dam that I remembered my note. I truly wasn't expecting to find all that much. The paper was probably gone. It wasn't! I pulled it out. The message I wrote was simply: "Hi! Where are you from?"

And the paper was covered with names and addresses on both sides. In fact there was a second paper now that was a continuation of the first. People from all over had signed, from other provinces, the United States and even one from Italy. I had an urge to take the paper with me but it just didn't feel right. So I put it back in the plastic holder and left. Presumably it's still there and hopefully, still collecting names.

Rest area ambassadors reflect on Youth Employment Program



Gena Kaebe

Working for the Ministry of Transportation as a member of the Y.E.P Rest Area Enhancement team has been extremely interesting.

There are two Prince George teams, each containing two members. For several months we have been involved in the restoration and enhancement of five rest areas in the Prince George area: Crooked River to the north, Cluculz Lake the west and Willow River, Bowron River and Slim Creek the East.

In each rest area we have carried out general touch ups and maintenance of the sites including trimming trees, picking-up garbage, painting and tidying the restrooms.

Customer service has also been a large part of our daily activities. On top of the general labour tasks we performed we also became researchers, tour guides, welcome committees, rescuers and historians.

This job has allowed me to learn more about my province, Prince George and the surrounding areas as well as what the

role, responsibilities and mandate of the Ministry of Transportation is.

Through research and communicating with locals we were able to compile a brochure for tourists as well as an information binder to help us answer any questions they may have.

As tour guides we spoke with people about their trips and gave them suggestions about attractions in the area and different routes to get to their destinations.

Welcoming people and saying hello to travellers is very important. It helps people feel welcome and provided them with a very pleasant experience.

Being rescuers was a much smaller part of our role but often a vital one. Several times we aided people with flat tires.

We drove a fellow back into Prince George when his truck broke down on the highway.

On several occasions we had to drive to find a cell phone signal to call tow trucks because someone has broken down.

We also prevented possible accidents by picking debris off of the highways. Becoming historians was an added bonus to the job.

We spoke with many locals from various areas around Prince George who informed us about the local history.

Gathering this information has been very interesting and useful because we have gained a better understanding of the history of northern British Columbia and because we were able to answer the many questions that tourists had for us.

While working in the rest areas, I have met many wonderful and kind people.

Working with these people made my

job exceptionally more interesting and fulfilling.

Something that I've said since I started is, "I work in the best office in the world, beside streams and rivers, near the mountains in the great outdoors. It doesn't get better than this!"

It has been extremely beneficial to me to have the opportunity to work outdoors, especially before I return to school.

By working for the Ministry of Transportation I've gained a better appreciation for my own province as well as attaining a sense of calmness within myself.

I'm better prepared for the up-and-coming stresses of returning to school.

This year is going to be especially difficult due to the fact I will be attending the University of Strathclyde, in Glasgow Scotland, as a full time student in the International Studies/Business program.

I feel I have gained the skills I need to return to school.

I would never have been able to accomplish this if it wasn't for the great support and opportunities the MoT.Y.E.P Rest Area Enhancement Project provided me.

Thanks to all of those who were involved in the project.

You have helped me get closer to my goal of working for the United Nations.

I would also like to say thank you to the people at Yellow Head Road and Bridge, they have been exceptionally kind to us.

Without their help, we would not have been able to perform our duties.

Rest area ambassadors reflect on Youth Employment Program



Steve Roebuck

For the past two months, Josh and myself had the privilege of maintaining the rest areas in our district. Our duties have ranged from dealing with questionable garbage at our worksites, to conversing with friendly tourists. Though maintaining and improving rest areas has given me a sense of civic pride, the truly rewarding experience has come from talking with the wide variety of people that choose to visit our province every year. Whether they are a little lost and need directions, or just want to stop for a chat with some locals, people usually seem quite comfortable approaching Josh and I for whatever they may need.

I feel that hiring students is a wise investment for a couple of reasons. For one, students that plan on attending post-secondary school have a real need for money (tuition, etc.). Secondly, hiring students shows that British Columbia cares about young people, and the future.



**Joshua
Hammerstedt**

Rest area enhancement is a project with one important goal: increasing tourist traffic by increasing tourist satisfaction. This includes keeping rest areas well groomed, well maintained, and most importantly, well cleaned.

Over the summer, Team Member Steve Roebuck and I have done our best not only to maintain high standards of rest area excellence, while simultaneously communicating with and aiding tourist.

By helping visitors to feel welcome, we attract them and those they tell about us, to return or visit British Columbia.

Our rest area enhancement crew has been rewarded with many positive comments about our rest areas and highways; this is a goal we should continue to strive for because a happy tourist may become a repeat tourist.



**Lindsay
Leguerrier**

I had a wonderful summer interacting with tourist from all around the world.

This job has taught me so much about other cultures and their values. I have also learned more than I thought I ever could about our own country.

It's very interesting how people from other cultures view Canadians. I have also acquired many important personal skills that will assist me later in life, such as the ability to work without directions, and the ability to take initiative when needed.

Overall, my experience working with the Ministry of Transportation has been an awesome one.

I would love to have the chance to be a Rest Area Ranger again.

Thank you once again for this fabulous opportunity.

Rest area ambassadors reflect

Ashley Flavelle

As the days passed by, I soon realized that this job was much more than a summer occupation.

We were given the opportunity to be our own bosses and to determine for ourselves what needed to be accomplished.

It seemed too good to be true at first, giving three young women control of a ministry truck and sending them off on their way without supervision, but I quickly understood their thought patterns behind this whole operation.

My role was as the team leader which required me to keep the team on track, and that was sometimes easier said than done, while working with two other girls who enjoy the simple pleasures of daily, practical pranks.

A fundamental part of this summer job was acting as ambassadors for Valemount and surrounding area.

We met interesting people from all walks of life, and from many different countries. I hope that over the past few months, we were able to show these visitors that our province values and highly respects them.

Since this job was only conceived this year, we encountered many obstacles and pitfalls with carrying out our duties. We were per say, the Ministry of Transportation guinea pigs. During the first few weeks of our employment, we were out at the small Terry Fox rest area on Highway 5. Acting as ambassadors we decided we should make general conversation with the guests, keep in mind this is at a rest area where visitors who are not expecting to make conversation, save between themselves. We approached an elderly couple enjoying the scenery at a picnic table, and initiated the conversation by saying, "hello, how do you do?" These people gave us a quick once over, and high tailed it out of there so fast that they forgot their new, unopened water bottles.



I hope that the next years' Rest Area Rangers are able to learn from our experiences and make their summer as enjoyable and memorable as this one has been to me.

Thank you for the opportunity, I would definitely do it again.

Julie Koster

This past summer job as a Rest Area Ranger taught me a lot of life long valuable skills.

It has taught me the importance of being self motivated and reliable.

It also taught me a lot about showing initiative, since almost all of our jobs were made up by us.

I think the best part of the summer was interacting with people from all around the world.

They were always excited to tell you about their travels and hear your stories, especially ones about bears!

It was a great experience and I would definitely do it all again.



Rest area ambassadors reflect



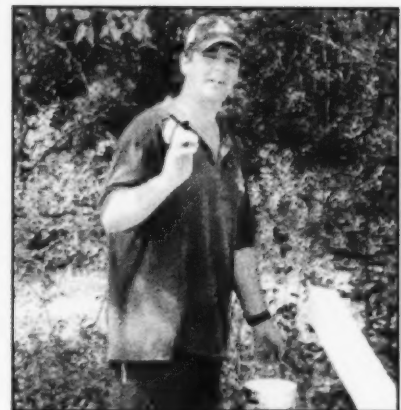
**Matthew
Goodland**

This summer was a fun and interesting experience. Jay and I met so many nice people. We taught them about the Vanderhoof and Fraser Lake area. They were all very grateful and interested. We really enjoyed talking to these people they also taught us a lot. In the beginning of August we re-graveled the walking trail at the Cluculz rest area. We spent a lot of our time picking up garbage and cigarette butts. I have really enjoyed this job and hope it continues in the future.



Jay Fyvie

The Rest Area Enhancement program provided me with a fun and interesting summer. While some of our time was devoted to rest area maintenance-painting, cleaning, weeding etc.- the vast majority of was spent meeting people from all over the world. By far the biggest population was from our friendly neighbors to the south- the United States. It was nice to talk to such a variety of folks and to hear their stories. I can honestly say that almost each and every one of them told us how beautiful B.C. was. Let's keep it that way!



Chris Styles

I enjoyed meeting a variety of people from all around the world, from Germany to Australia to people from here in Prince George. Most people I talked to gave positive feedback about how this program was good for the rest areas and how nice the crews were all along the road. My group did a variety of projects, mostly painting to enhance the rest areas! We painted restrooms, garbage cans, benches, and handicap parking signs. We also spread gravel along trails and filled up holes. I enjoyed the summer and would definitely do it again!

Sister act really cleans up - rest areas, that is

A pair of sisters has teamed up as youth ambassadors for the ministry and their local community serving as Rest Area Ambassadors for the Bulkley-Stikine District this summer.

Darcy and Kim McLeod call Dease Lake home for now, but both will pursue academic endeavors in the "big smoke" come September.

Team leader Kim has already completed two years of college at CNC as she works toward a career in nursing, and Darcy will be attending UNBC. Both

girls have an interest in writing; Darcy is interested in artwork—especially in comics.

Rest Area Rangers like Darcy (l) and Kim (r) are valuable short-term additions to our team.

Students bring a fresh face to the ministry and, in this case, are able to offer visitors value-added information about the area they know so well. In turn, they earn much-needed funds to continue their schooling. Northern Region was happy to have them!



Darcy and Kim McLeod

Ambassadors staff Skeena rest areas

David Johnstone and Deserai Vandavelde are two of our student ambassadors who have taken on the summer role of Rest Area Ambassador. Together, they've helped make rest areas in the Skeena District more enjoyable for all who visit.

Deserai, the team leader, called Terrace "home" for most of her life, so it's not surprising that she would have a love of outdoor pursuits such as camping and hiking—topics also of interest to her rest area clientele. Soccer is another of her passions, having played two seasons for Kings University College in Edmonton. In September, Deserai returned to the flatlands once more to continue her studies toward becoming a therapist assistant.

David Johnstone was the other member of this Rest Area Ambassadors team. His family roots in the Terrace area date back more than 80 years. In fact, it was Great Grampa Johnstone who



David Johnstone and Deserai Vandavelde

founded the hot springs just south of Lakelse Lake. The eldest of three children, David returned to the University of Victoria in September where he has started second year at the School of Music, majoring in music education. After graduation, he hopes to teach music in BC. In addition to playing the trumpet,

David is also interested in the information fields of programming and web design. We thank all our students who, as Rest Area Ambassadors, imparted their local knowledge and enthusiasm upon visitors to northern region, and we wish them the best of luck in their continuing scholastic endeavours.

Outhouse mysteries part of a great summer job

By David Johnstone, Deserai Vandavelde, Alissa Gervais and Evan Smithanik

Throughout the summer, we all enjoyed our experience working on the rest area enhancement project. Without a doubt, the most memorable aspect of the job centered around the heart of any rest area - the outhouse. One might think that an outhouse would be immune to harm, but we found that this is not the case.

On one hot day at Telegraph Point Rest Area, between Terrace and Prince Rupert, we were painting the barriers when I (David Johnstone) decided to go and change into my shorts. I left my crew

member, Deserai, and headed towards the second outhouse. As I got near, I noticed that something was not right. From a distance I could see some black stuff lining the outer wall of the outhouse.

When I finally got close enough to see, I saw something I wasn't expecting—ants—hundreds of them! Some crawling; others with wings ready to fly away!

I opened the door to examine the inside. More ants! Everywhere I looked – Ants! They started to crawl up my boots as I crossed into their territory. I called Deserai over to examine the situation. She was just as shocked as I was. We had never had ant problems before, so it was

quite unexpected. Unfortunately, we didn't have any ant spray, so we decided to leave them alone and deal with them the next day.

A couple of hours later, I went to use the washroom before we headed back to town and found another surprise. All the ants had vanished! It was as if they had never been there. Where did they go? It's a mystery.

Even if we never know where all the ants went, we do know that working for this project over the summer was a very enjoyable experience for all of us. We've met interesting people from around the world, encountered unexpected wildlife and become tourists in our own backyard.

Rest area ambassadors reflect on Youth Employment Program

My name is Evan; I'm a fourth year economics student at the University of Victoria. I came back to my home in the Comox Valley for the summer and managed to get this summer job with the Ministry of Transportation. I was hired on as the Team Leader and have been enjoying learning and working at the Ministry over the past couple of months.

Over the summer we have focused on cleaning up and improving the rest stops in our area.

The main tasks we have undertaken have been to mow and weed eat the lawns, paint some of the structures, clean up garbage, remove broom and to improve the picnic tables. These tasks have all been quite different and we learned something from each of them.

Though we concentrated on these tasks, we have also been able to do several other interesting jobs throughout the summer. We have administered MoT Customer Satisfaction surveys to the public that passed through the rest areas and also got to help out with a native reburial that took place in Qualicum.



We have assisted the public where ever possible with examples ranging from answering a wide range of questions to assisting and calling a tow truck for a lady when her car spun off the Inland Island Highway. Our summer is over but we are finishing up with some traffic counts to help with estimates of each of the rest

area's use. I have had a fun summer working with the highways staff in Courtenay. I feel that this job has helped me build skills that will be very valuable in my future employment. I have also enjoyed the chance to improve services for the public while learning about the ministry and how it operates.

Angels vs. Rest Areas

(An account by one of South Island's Rest Area Ambassador crews)

We would like to introduce ourselves. We are Charlie's Angels. Our ministry team is made up of three bright and enthusiastic UVIC students: Katie MacQuarrie, Geography and Environmental studies; Lehran Hache, Biology and Anthropology; and Wendy Kecks, Math and Physics.

Our mission: to beautify the rest stops and save travelers from boring vacations! Our chief at headquarters Charlie, a.k.a. Brent Scott, has supplied us this summer with many tools and skills and good fishing stories. During this summer we have saved many a dull rest area with painting, weeding, landscaping and sunny smiles.

We thank the ministry for the awesome summer opportunity and for helping us to discover Vancouver Island all over again.

Mission accomplished!



Wendy, Katie and Lehran and their fellow South Island Rangers, Cody Dunlop and Reed Scott

It's no picnic building a beautiful rest area

West Kootenay District's Grand Forks Rest Area Rangers were hard at work this summer in the Hall Creek Rest Area on Highway 33. At right are Thomas Rezansoff and Lindsay Hall (with shovels), Stefan Defoe and Joanna Norton (in background)



Operation Fescue

Submitted by Ian the Rest Area Warrior

It was a hot day, the hottest of the summer by far...the sweat blistered from my skin as I glared down on my foe. The ranks were wide and aligned in a grid like pattern; they wavered in the light breeze which flowed down from Bridal Lake. They had occupied this area for years, left to breed...grow and flourish. That time had passed; the Rangers had arrived to clean the Rest Area of the infestation.

With my fuel full, my weapon fully loaded and my helmet affixed to my head, I began the assault. My gas powered engine hummed as we encroached on their positions, you could almost sense the fear in the enemy. Flanking wide to the left I hit their weakest front, they were no match for my weapons of mass destruction. Their ranks fell, the grid was discombobulated as my weapon cut down the ranks. The sun shone down on my back as the sweat glistened from my pores as I swung the whacker like a pendulum sending entrails of the fallen flying.

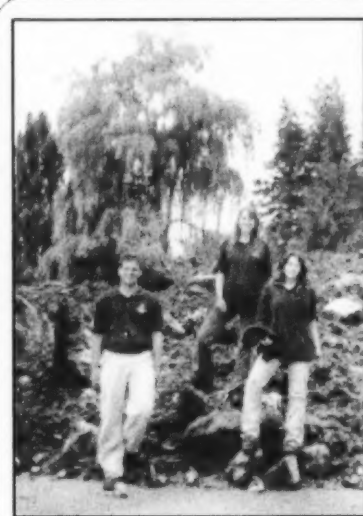
The battle was far from over, my nylon line was exhausted and an immediate retreat was required. I fled to my supply

vehicle, loosened the shoulder strap, removed my safety helmet and placed my weapon on the gate of the vehicle. What seemed like hours were minutes as I restocked the nylon line, always peering over my shoulder at the now dented Brigade of Fescue. Restocked and ready to roll, I strapped my trusty whacker over my shoulder and affixed my high visibility helmet.

The assault raged on for hours with sweat condensing on my face as the end of the battle loomed just over the horizon. The few remaining grass shoots were eradicated with little to no resistance. The once proud and tall Brigade of Fescue had been toppled and the long process of reconstruction commenced.

My gas powered whacker was replaced with an aluminum rake and I began to collect what was left of my foe. The strewn remains were soon isolated to a single heap in the center of the field.

It was over; the Rest Area was safe for another day thanks to the Rest Area Ambassadors. As I packed up my equipment into the truck, I remember the smile on my face as I worked away with gleeful contentment in the beautiful rolling valleys of the Kootenays.



Creston Rest Area Ambassadors faced a new challenge when they tried to get to their rest areas on Hwy 3A. On August 7th, the Kuskonook Rest Area narrowly missed getting buried by a massive debris slide that cut off Highway 3A. Pictured from left to right is Olin Bjarnason, Nicole Searle, and Richelle Gudjonson.

Road Runner

Read it online at
www.gov.bc.ca/tran

Rest Area Rangers help toads migrate

Environmentally conscious Rest Area Ambassadors in the West Kootenay District noticed a plethora of small frogs hopping across a small area of the Summit Lake Rest Area.

In an effort to protect the small creatures (2 cm in diameter), they closed the area to vehicular traffic for a week until the annual migration of Western Toads was complete.

From left to right: Erin Gontes, Jared Currie, Jade Dennill, Tyler Dennill, Chelsea Jensen, Haven Anderson.



Barbecue celebrates program success

Submitted by Grant Lachmuth, DMT

We held the Okanagan-Shuswap wrap-up BBQ at the Bear Creek Provincial Park on August 26th and it was attended by the crew, Wilstone Consulting staff and Ministry of Transportation staff (Dean Handley, Jeff Wiseman, Vicki Martin and Grant Lachmuth).

The rain held off, the food was good and fun was had by all.

The crew told us stories about some of their most memorable times as rest area crew staff, but I think that the true testament to the success of this program was their desire to all come back next year and do it all over again.

On behalf of Okanagan-Shuswap District, I would particularly like to thank Jeff Wiseman, Vicki Martin and Dean Handley who coordinated this program and helped to make it so successful in our district.

They did a fantastic job!



Renewal tour rolls on through district offices

Submitted by Susan Ingram, Manager, Ministry Renewal

This past summer, Deputy Minister Dan Doyle took the time to connect with ministry employees across the province during a tour of offices in the North and in the Kootenays. Dan focused a lot on meeting staff to discuss the ministry's vision, the importance of renewal in the public service, and other issues. I was fortunate to be able to join the tour and further the discussion about renewal initiatives.

Staff from the Northern Region, the Bulkley-Stikine District and the Skeena District provided great tours of the new inland ferry being built at Francois Lake, the remote community of Meziadin on Highway 37, district offices in Smithers and Terrace, and the Lava Beds Zaulzap site on the Nisga'a Highway.

At every stop in the Northwest, there was a friendly welcome and a good discussion. We also visited the Kootenays where, too, the welcome was warm, but there some surprises in store.

Jack Bennetto, our Rocky Mountain District Manager, hosted a luncheon at his home for Dan, Southern Interior Regional Director Tracy Cooper and me. The three of us were handed "Serving Renewal" aprons and put to work as chefs for the luncheon. Surprise!

This leg of the tour included stops at the Rampart rest area between Cranbrook and Elko, an on-site update about the Steamboat Hill project and an overview of the Rocky Mountain District's efforts to further renewal in the ministry. A presentation about the Weigh Scale Initiative and a visit to the Moyie Bluffs realignment project capped the tour.

Dan Doyle's tour of the Northwest and the Kootenays helped foster discussion, and those talks gave people a chance to see how their work contributes to the ministry's overall vision. Many expressed their thanks to Dan for taking the time to meet them face to face out in their workplaces.

It's clear from this tour that there is a lot of pride out there, which will ensure challenges are met and overcome. We are the "can do" ministry, and we're very proud of it. It's hard to thank all of the people we met during this summer tour, but here are just some of those who helped make it a success:

Northern Region

Regional Director Kevin Richter; Bulkley-Stikine District Manager Steve Uyesugi; Skeena District Manager Don Ramsay; Bill Maitland, Area Manager, Roads, Dease Lake; Field Service staffers Brian Twiname, Bob Petho, Osmo Joronen, Brad Scott, Brian Gallagher and Ken Doll

Southern Interior Region

Regional Director Tracy Cooper; Rocky Mountain District Manager Jack Bennetto; Stephanie Daniels, Operations Assistant, Rocky Mountain District; Rest area ambassadors Haley MacKay and Sacha Aldridge; Gordon Chudleigh, Area Manager, Bridges, Cranbrook; Erin Moxon, District Engineer



Dan Doyle visits the team at the Bulkley-Stikine District office



Skeena District staffers poses with the Deputy Minister, and some fantastic local scenery in the background



Rocky Mountain District welcomes Dan Doyle on a sunny afternoon

Ministry Renewal Manager Susan Ingram, Deputy Minister Dan Doyle and Southern Interior Regional Director Tracy Cooper were the surprise chefs at an impromptu luncheon. And no one was more surprised than the three of them.

